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ABSTRACT

These four conference papers from the Biennial Conference on Postsecondary Education for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing focus on transitioning from high school to college. The first paper, "Transitioning Collaboration with Schools and Vocational Rehabilitation" (Catherine Wilson and Wayne Giese), describes the North Carolina School for the Deaf's collaboration with the state vocational rehabilitation agency. The second paper, "Transition Planning: A High School-Postsecondary Connection" (Theresa Smythe and others), discusses the partnership between the Missouri School for the Deaf and St. Louis Community College. A transition workshop organizer and agenda is included. "Your Parents Are Not with You Anymore" (Charlotte O. Kirby and Tris Ottolino), describes the Program for Hearing Impaired, a one-year transition program following high school graduation which provides young adults who are deaf or hard of hearing with the realistic opportunity to evaluate and improve their academic, vocational, social, and independent living skills. The last paper, "Perspective on Liberal Arts Learning: First Year Seminar" (Catherine Andersen and others), describes a seminar that teaches freshmen or transfer students at Gallaudet University study skills and time management, resource utilization, and the societal functions of institutions of higher learning. (Some papers contain references.) (CR)

Transitioning from High School to College

Conference Proceedings
1996

Challenge of Change: Beyond the Horizon

Seventh Biennial Conference on Postsecondary Education for Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, April 17-20, 1996, Knoxville, TN

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Transitioning Collaboration with High Schools and Vocational Rehabilitation

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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), PL 101-476, states that an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for deaf and hard of hearing students must include a statement of needed transition services beginning no later than age 16 and annually thereafter. When determined appropriate for the student, transition services should begin at fourteen or younger. Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities including postsecondary education, vocational training, employment, acquisition of daily living skills, and/or community participation. Both the student and parent must be invited to participate in the IEP if the meeting includes transition planning.

Transition services are an integral part of the Individualized Education Plan and not an add-on. Therefore, the transition plan cannot be dealt with separately from the IEP. Since the transition plan is part of the IEP, students and parents are covered by the legal rights and guarantees of the IEP. The inclusion of the transition plan makes the IEP a plan to achieve desired post-school outcomes in employment, education, etc. The goals and objectives of the IEP should be written with the intention of aiding the student in accomplishing his or her identified post-school goals. If transition services are not needed in a particular area, then it is required that this be stated on the plan.

There are various ways of approaching the implementation and identification of the transition services plan. At the North Carolina Schools for the Deaf (NCSD) we have designed a Transition Plan form to state the needed transition services. This plan identifies the student's post-school goals, the activities requested to assist in their accomplishment, the responsible agency or person, and the targeted completion date.

If a state or local agency is responsible for providing or paying for transition services following the student's graduation from high school, this must be indicated on the transition plan. The school/interagency transition team, which meets with the student and parent to plan transition services, should include involved agencies, school staff members, postsecondary representatives, and others responsible for the programming and planning. To facilitate the establishment of this interagency team for students in regional schools for the deaf, these team meetings may be held in the community. Suggested team members are representatives from community resource centers, colleges, training centers, interpreter providers, vocational rehabilitation, etc.

The participating agency is defined as a state or local agency, other than the public agency responsible for the student's education, that is financially and legally responsible for providing transition services to the student. If a participating agency fails to provide agreed upon transition services indicated in the IEP of a student with a disability, a meeting for the purpose of identifying alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives is required. Once a post-school commitment has been made by the deaf or hard of hearing student, the exit interagency team meeting can be held whereupon agency responsibility can be identified.

Our primary state agency collaboration at this time is with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The VR counselors' offices are situated on the campus of the North Carolina School for the Deaf. This easy accessibility facilitates communication, coordination, and planning. Another asset to the working relationship we have with Vocational Rehabilitation is that their regional training and assessment facility is located approximately two miles from our campus. Because of these factors, VR is an important working member of our transition team. They are constantly working with us in assuring the provision of transition services to our students in employment, training, postsecondary education, and independent living.

As part of our transition services to fourteen year olds, most of whom are in the eighth grade, an eighth grade career profile is compiled. This booklet contains results of interest testing, learning style evaluation, achievement testing, transition planning, and aptitude testing. Even at this early stage of transition planning, a Vocational Rehabilitation evaluator administers the General Aptitude Test Battery to our eighth graders. The results are interpreted to the eighth graders along with the provision of the above mentioned information. This, in turn, assists the student in filling out a transition plan along with the required Department of Public Instruction's four year education plan. During the eighth grade orientation the students are advised of VR's role in their transition plans as well as how to contact the counselors on our campus.

Since this is only the second year that a transition school counselor has been assigned to coordinate transition services to NCSD students and the state has not designated specific forms and guidelines to follow other than those stated by the law, we are constantly designing and updating our forms. Rather than using the IEP objective sheets to indicate student transition goals, we designed a transition plan form to complete. This gives a unified picture of how the student intends to make his or her transition from school to the community. As you can see on the North Carolina School for the Deaf Transition Plan, Vocational Rehabilitation plays a very important role in our students' transition.

In three out of the four postsecondary outcomes indicated on this transition plan, Vocational Rehabilitation has offered their services. In the employment transition action plan section, VR provides services in assessment, job shadowing, job skills development, and pre-employment training. Not only do our VR counselors provide aptitude testing in the eighth grade, they also provide an in-depth vocational assessment profile for our juniors. This assessment is used by the transition team to guide the student in finalizing career plans and establishing an IWRP (Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan). VR also assists us in planning and directing job shadowing opportunities for our students.

In the education section of the transition action plan, Vocational Rehabilitation works closely with the school transition team and the students in empowering them in selecting the appropriate vocational training or college or university. The Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, transition school counselor, job developer, student, and parents meet regularly to provide financial information, arrange college tours, and discuss any questions that may arise.

Regional Vocational Rehabilitation counselors are present at our annual Transition Fair to meet our students and their families. The Transition Fair evolved from what we once referred to as *College Day*. Along with Vocational Rehabilitation representatives, regional agency representatives staff a booth from which they explain their services to our students, staff, and parents. Agencies represented include the Community Regional Resource Centers, Regional Mental Health Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Assisted Living Programs, Services for the Blind as well as representatives from nine colleges. As our program and collaboration develop, the Transition Fair is only part of what may eventually be called *Transition Day* where agencies, colleges, and training facilities can schedule workshops, individual sessions, and such with students, their parents, and staff to better educate all of us in transition services.

Vocational Rehabilitation also works very closely with the school transition team in the Residential/Independent Living section of the action plan. VR, along with the Single Portal of Entry community coordinator, facilitates transition for multiply impaired students by aiding in the locating and placement in group homes, sheltered workshops, adult day activity programs, and the like. VR also assists multiply disabled students transition by obtaining job time based measures and other needed measurements of their ability.

Last, but not least, Vocational Rehabilitation also assists the transition team in completing an annual graduation survey. Since VR has frequent contact with our graduates who seem to be quite mobile in jobs and college attendance, they are able to help us in obtaining addresses and telephone numbers to facilitate our contact attempts. As you can see, Vocational Rehabilitation plays a very important role in the transition planning and action plan implementation for North Carolina School for the Deaf's student population.

Transition Planning: A High School - Postsecondary Connection

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Education is functionally different at each level, from infancy to postsecondary instruction. Approaches to quality education and challenges faced by educators are, therefore, unique to each level. Early childhood educators, elementary, high school and postsecondary teachers are independently supported by their own professional associations which address their specific challenges. These organizations give opportunities for sharing common experiences, concerns and ideas that ultimately benefit students at particular levels.

While this camaraderie is extremely important to education, it is also important for educators across all levels to come together. It is a well-established fact that an essential aspect of every educational program is providing transition to and from that program level. In order to do that, there has to be a clear understanding of what came before and what lies ahead. While teachers are ultimately playing a part in preparing students for independent and fruitful adult life, a more immediate goal is preparing students to simply acquire the skills necessary to take the next step. It is an unfortunate reality that in many cases, the only exposure a teacher has to that next step might be the memory of their own experience--for instance, remembering "when I was in high school." Obviously, that isn't enough understanding to provide long-term quality transitional experiences for students. Teachers of varied levels of instruction need to get to know and understand one another's goals and expectations. They first need to connect with one another.

Making a Connection and Identifying a Common Goal

A prevailing theme of the 1994 PEC Regional Conference was partnership. An aim of partnership is developing mutual recognition and understanding in order to attain creative, workable and effective solutions. In 1994, as now, educators and services providers in secondary and postsecondary education were given an opportunity to connect. As a direct result, elementary, high school and college educators from Missouri were linked, quite by chance, and began talking about transition for deaf students in our state. As we got to know one another during the course of the conference, we found ourselves discussing our concerns and sharing

strengths and weaknesses of our individual programs. We learned that we faced many similar challenges and that perhaps it was possible to face some of them together.

Transition education for Missouri students was a common concern. Our most animated discussions were inspired by a particular presentation made by staff from Hinds Community College and Jacksonville State University called "Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students from High School to Postsecondary Education: A Proposed Curriculum to Facilitate the Process." A comprehensive curriculum for a Freshman orientation class was described which included creative strategies for addressing transition issues. Providing effective transition experiences in Missouri soon became our goal. Developing a partnership between the Missouri School for the Deaf and St. Louis Community College would be a means to that end. And so, a friendly partnership developed and our dialogue about transition began to take shape.

Identifying Challenges

It was important for us to recognize the challenges and barriers we would face when creating transition experiences for deaf students statewide. The major challenges we identified were:

I. Diversity
   - A. Students come from a wide variety of educational experiences.
     1. One state residential/day facility for the deaf
     2. Two private residential/day facilities
     3. Five large local school districts with programming for deaf students
     4. Numerous smaller districts with specialized programming
     5. Many local education (LEAs) providing services
   - B. Methods, philosophies, and evaluation strategies differ greatly among the educational programs.
   - C. Students' personal backgrounds vary widely.
     1. They represent a range of economic and cultural environments.
     2. The levels of familial stability and support are all-encompassing.
     3. There are students from hearing families as well as deaf families.
     4. Language use ranges from ASL to oral English; some have minimal use of language in any form.
   - D. The levels of hearing loss vary from hard of hearing to profoundly deaf.
   - E. Options for future achievement include:
     1. Vocational education
     2. Community college
     3. University
     4. Immediate entry into the world of work

F. There are a variety of organizations and agencies providing services for deaf adults, including interpreting, counseling, and job training. All have a stake in the transition process.

II. Critical Mass Issues

A. There are large concentrations of deaf/hard of hearing people in some areas of the state.

B. There are scatterings of deaf/hard of hearing people in small or singular numbers throughout the state.

1. These individuals often do not know their options.
2. They have limited to no contact with the deaf community.
3. They have difficulty accessing services.
4. They often remain unrecognized.

C. In postsecondary settings, a deaf person is often one in a class/department or one of few with specific needs. Therefore, it is difficult to justify the cost and effort of specialized services and instruction.

III. Curriculum

A. As we strive to accommodate diversity in our curricula, time, space, and creativity are often at a premium.

IV. Finances

A. New and improved transition curricula are not likely to receive top budgeting priority.

B. The time and expertise needed to acquire funding for a new or improved program is prohibitive to the realization of a good idea.

Choosing a Path

It is no easy task to realize a goal. There are so many possibilities for action that it is difficult to know just where to begin. Brainstorming is the first step; getting all the possibilities before you and then choosing the one that best fits. We wanted a high school - postsecondary transition experience that would be: inclusive (in spite of the diversity); inexpensive (anticipating financial constraints); collaborative (fostering partnership); and effective (giving practical and useful information to students about how to make a transition from high school to adult life). Such a transition experience could be anything from the development of a full-fledged year-long curriculum to a half-day seminar for students. Recognizing all of the challenges, we decided to start relatively small. We would work together to provide a 2-day workshop for high school juniors and seniors across Missouri who were deaf or hard of hearing.

What kind of information could we provide during the two days? Our primary tool in planning topics for the workshop was the curriculum guide developed by Hinds Community College for their freshman orientation course. Essentials of College Living presents nine topics considered to be crucial for beginning postsecondary students who are deaf and hard of hearing. We focused on six of these topics and related

activities as we planned our statewide workshop. Our goal was to give useful information and to provide students with an opportunity to get their own individual questions addressed. The topics we included were: the college structure, rules and resources; self-esteem; healthy lifestyle; personal finance; time management; and stress management. In order to meet our needs, we added interpreter services to the list. These particular topics were chosen based on what we saw as the most crucial to our students at the time. In limiting ourselves to just those areas, we were able to present more comprehensive and effective information and activities in the short amount of time available.

How did we organize this kind of workshop and get all the support we needed? When individuals from more than one organization are trying to plan an event together, it can be confusing. We took the "divide and conquer" approach and each individual was involved in the planning. This included making contacts within the sponsoring organizations as well as with community collaborators; designing workshop activities; advertising; and accomplishing the tremendous number of incidental tasks such as typing itineraries, getting refreshments, and planning social activities and meals. Obviously, someone had to take the lead in seeing the plans to their fruition. In our case, the host school, Missouri School for the Deaf, became the core organizer.

Communication is always a challenge and "the left arm doesn't always know what the right arm is doing." We developed a simple organizer that, when used in an effective manner, can be a big help in keeping everyone aware of what has been accomplished and lined up so far. That organizer is included in Appendix A.

The Workshop

After several planning meetings between the Missouri School for the Deaf and St. Louis Community College, presentations and activities were arranged for the transition workshop. The two-day agenda is included in Appendix B.

How was it inclusive? Students from all over the state were invited to spend two days at the Missouri School for the Deaf. Letters describing the event were sent to all of the school districts and programs that identified deaf or hard of hearing students. Teen clubs were also sent fliers. This workshop included students that were college-bound as well as those who were not. Parallel programming was planned that would encompass nearly all of the same topics. Students who attended represented all program types and all communication styles.

How was it collaborative? Representatives from a variety of state agencies, colleges, and local organizations made presentations to small groups. While these speakers focused on particular topics, they also had the opportunity to give information on the particular services they had to offer to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Interpreters-in-training from a local college were present to provide interpreting services. The interpreter coordinator from St. Louis Community College provided "coaching" to both the students and the interpreters-in-training.

How was it inexpensive? No speakers received stipends for their participation. All of the agencies and organizations that sent representatives routinely provide those kinds of outreach services at no cost. In cases where speakers came in from out of town, accommodations were paid for by their respective agencies. Students were housed at the state school and additional costs for food and increased supervisory staff were nominal. Those costs were absorbed by the state program and students were not asked to pay a fee for the workshop. Interpreting services were provided by practicum students and collaborating colleges, so there was no cost involved. Incidental costs, such as advertising, copying, and refreshments were minimal.

Was the workshop effective? We accomplished what we set out to do which was to provide practical and important information for students in transition to postsecondary settings. Students were active participants in activities and discussions. They interacted with one another in spite of diversity and they seemed to genuinely enjoy their experience. Their evaluations of the workshop indicated that they had learned some valuable lessons. Naturally, they still had many questions and concerns that more extensive transition activities could address.

College representatives at a subsequent annual college fair indicated that students seemed to be more informed than in previous years. They asked more pertinent questions and appeared to have a better understanding of college terminology. So, a fairly immediate positive difference was perceived. Realistically, this single two-day workshop alone could not be expected to fully prepare students to make their transitions. But from the perspective of the planning committee, this event was a positive step taken toward the greater goal of increased awareness and preparedness for all Missouri students who are deaf.

Appendix A

Transition Workshop Organizer

Workshop dates:

Location:

Audience *(note communication modes/assistive devices and special health needs)*:

Advertising *(how will you find and attract this audience)*:

Organizational Support *(identify persons within your organization from whom support/input is needed)*:

Person	Contact	Commitment/ Input	Written Update

Goals:

Interagency Support:

Agency/Contact Person	Phone Number	Role	Written Follow-Up	Address

Interpreters:

Name/ Address	Phone Number	Role	Written Follow-Up

Site Support *(teachers, office personnel, supervisors, etc.)*:

Name/Location	Phone Number	Role	Written Follow-Up

Schedule *(attach)*:

Appendix B

Transition Workshop Agenda

Day One

7:30	Breakfast
8:15-9:00	Welcome Performance presented by M.S.D. Drama Club
9:00-9:40	**Breakout Sessions**
Group 1:	"Everything" You Need to Know About College *Presenter:* Theresa Smythe, St. Louis Community College
Group 2:	"Everything" You Need to Know About On-the-Job Training *Presenter:* Toni Scrivner, Callaway County Special Services
Group 3:	"Everything" You Need to Know About On-the-Job Training/Shadowing *Presenters:* C.J. Prather, Advent and Diane Ludden, Missouri School for the Deaf
Group 4:	Financial Planning *Presenter:* Sherri Andrews-Lammert, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
9:45-10:30	Using Interpreter Services *Presenter:* Loretto Durham, St. Louis Community College
10:30-11:00	Role-Play: Use of Interpreters *Interpreters:* William Woods University
11:00-12:00	Self-Advocacy *Presenter:* Jerry Covell, Missouri Commission for the Deaf
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-2:00	**Breakout Sessions Repeated**
2:00-3:15	Self-Esteem *Presenter:* Steve Hamerdinger, Department of Mental Health

Day Two

7:30 Breakfast

8:15-11:45 **Breakout Activities**

Group 1: Field Trip to William Woods University

8:30-9:00	Introduction to Scavenger Hunt
9:00-10:00	Scavenger Hunt
10:00-10:45	Regroup and Discuss Scavenger Hunt Experiences
10:45-11:45	Surviving Postsecondary Classes
	Presenter: Paula King, St. Louis Community College

Group 2: Activities for Students Entering the Workforce

Coordinators: Joan Carrington, Cheryl Hibbett, Susan Anderson, Missouri School for the Deaf and Eric Driskill, St. Louis Community College

8:15-9:15	Future Dreams
9:15-10:15	Stress Release/Leisure Skills
10:15-11:15	Job Vocabulary Scavenger Hunt
11:15-12:10	Healthy Lifestyles

12:00-12:45 Lunch

12:45-2:00 Deaf Adult Panel Discussion

Panelists: Jessica, Calvin, Angela, and Katie

2:00 Wrap-up, Evaluation, Dismissal

Your Parents Are Not With You Anymore!

Charlotte O. Kirby

Tris Ottolino
Program for Hearing Impaired
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois

For years parents have been cautioned, "It's time to cut the apron strings." As a provider of services to Deaf adolescents, we see more and more of our students either cut loose without the tools to be independent, or overprotected and smothered by parents who mean well but don't understand that becoming independent is one of the first steps in turning dreams into reality.

At this conference two years ago, one of the presentations emphasized that too many Deaf adolescents were not being prepared to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. While the presenter was concentrating mainly on academic programs, it is believed that this lack of preparation also applies to employment and community involvement.

It is mandatory that we as service providers, assist our students or clients in accumulating the tools that will empower them to cope with the transition and change from dependence to independence thus enabling them to be ready for opportunities as they arise.

Program For Hearing Impaired Description

The Program for Hearing Impaired (PHI) is a one year, transitional program which takes place following high school graduation. The program is based on a work-study concept and enrolls approximately 50 students annually. Since its establishment in 1960, the focus of PHI has always been to enable Deaf and Hard of Hearing young adults the opportunity to realistically evaluate and improve their academic, vocational, social and independent living skills. Admission to the program is based on the following criteria:

Disability: Hearing impairment sufficiently severe enough to affect the development of academic, vocational, or social achievement;

Age: 17-24;

I.Q.: Minimum of 80 on the Performance section of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale; and

Marital Status: Single.

The Program is divided into the *Six Week Summer Program* followed by the *Nine Month Program.* The purpose of the summer program is to provide an intensive diagnostic evaluation which will assist students, referring agencies, and parents in establishing future vocational, academic, and personal plans. The Nine

Month Program is divided into three separate tracks. The *Pre-Vocational Track* serves about 75% of our students. The students in this track are enrolled in classes for half a day and work the other half day. The remaining 25% of the students either fall into the *College Preparatory Program* or the *Cooperative Alternative Secondary Program (CASP).* The College Prep Program is designed to provide the necessary academic skills for those students who are realistically planning to continue their education at the postsecondary level. CASP is for the one or two students each year who have not completed their senior year of high school, but for one reason or another prefer to complete the requirements for graduation by attending PHI. The students in all three tracks are required to maintain a part-time work experience. All of the students are housed in one of the university residence halls. Most of the classes are self-contained and taught by one of our state certified instructors or by one of the two counselors employed by PHI. The Program also employs its own residence hall staff to live on the floor with the students. The program director, secretary and coordinator complete the official staff. The staff is, however, fortunate enough to be able to draw on the expertise of a large auxiliary staff which includes university faculty, graduate and undergraduate students from Audiology, Rehabilitative Counseling for the Deaf, Deaf Education, and Speech Language and Pathology.

During the Six Week Summer Program, the students are exposed to various part-time jobs that exist in the local community as well as on campus. The job description for the Program Coordinator lists job development and placement as one of the primary job roles. Job tours to these sites are scheduled and job interviews are arranged for each student's first work preference. It is important to be honest and up front about the work experience. Part-time employment is seldom one's career goal. Whenever possible, personal preferences and individual abilities are considered. However, it is important for the student to be flexible since part-time employment is usually based on job availability and availability of time in one's schedule. A part-time job helps foster good work habits, develop self confidence, and provides spending money.

PHI stresses classes, work, and independent living skills throughout the nine months. These skills are evaluated with a mini-report midway through both first and second semesters. Comprehensive reports are written at the end of each semester and mailed to the students' counselors from the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). During the final month of the second semester, DORS counselors from the students' home areas are strongly encouraged to meet with their clients at PHI for a half day staffing. This helps to reintroduce the student and their DORS counselor, and outlines the future plans and decisions of the student.

Tools for Success

It has been stated that most working people change jobs between 5 and 7 times in their lifetime. Many of these job changes will require additional academic classes and re-training. That is the reason for this presentation. The presentation will focus on two areas that are emphasized in the Program curriculum. The first is a required one-year class for all students that incorporates career exploration, consumer economics, and

the development of independent living skills. As each unit is completed, the information is placed in a file folder. At the conclusion of the Program, the students have well organized files that contain both personal and useful information that will assist them in not only seeking future employment but in functioning independently as productive members of their communities. These 'tools' not only give the student a more positive self-concept but a feeling of control, knowing that they do not have to rely on mom and dad totally.

It would be prudent to explain to your students or clients that as their circumstances change and they become more established in a permanent location, some of these items would best be kept in a safety deposit box.

File Box Information

Employment

- Pay stubs for current year
- Identification: Social Security card, birth certificate, passport or alien registration card
- Resume, list of personal references, pocket resume
- *Looking for a Job* handouts

Financial

- Savings/investments records
- Bank statements, canceled checks
- Credit card account numbers

Medical

- Immunization records
- Audiograms

Insurance

- Health insurance brochure and policy
- Car insurance policy
- Property insurance policy or tenant insurance policy

Education/Training

- Copies of completed Financial Aid Form (FAF)
- IWRP (Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan) from Vocational Rehabilitation
- High school diploma
- Training certificates, licenses

Income Tax

- Tax returns (previously filed)

Housing/Property

- *Tips for Renting an Apartment* handouts

- Written inventory of property
- Receipts for large purchases, vehicle title
- Service contracts, warranties and manuals

Community Resources

- Centers for Independent Living
- Social Security office
- Department of Transportation

Choosing Post-Secondary Education

This past year, *USA Today* published information on what teachers thought students should know to be successful. The following are the results of that survey:

- 95% cited the need for problem solving skills
- 67% said informational technology was important
- 63% commented on the need for advanced math and science classes
- 42% felt the mastery of a second language correlated with success.

How do you measure success? Are we talking about a degree from one of the top 10 universities in the United States? Or are we talking about a million dollar paycheck? In order to encompass all aspects of success, we can choose to look at a more broad definition. A person is a success if they are able to turn their dream into reality.

There are many reasons for obtaining post-secondary training. It might permit a learner to be at an advantage in the job market or it could help advance them in their current job. Post-secondary training could allow a person to be more mobile and therefore enable them to change career paths if necessary. By receiving training, a learner is able to keep up-to-date with technological advances and is more prepared for relocating if his/her job becomes streamlined or omitted from the company. "The more education an individual has, the more likely they are to find employment" (Rawlings, 1994).

Based on 1991 U.S. Census Bureau information, there was clearly a positive relationship between years completed in school and employment rates (Lam, 1994). The following are the results of the census:

- A person with 4 years of college had an unemployment rate of 2.4%.
- A person with 1 to 3 years of college had a 3.2% unemployment rate.
- A person with a high school degree had a 4.5% unemployment rate.

When considering post-secondary training, an individual has many options today. In the 1800s, there was really only one option for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) was the option for about 100 years (Rawlings, 1994). Today there are many more options available for learners that are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. These options include colleges, universities, technical/vocational schools, community colleges, on-the-job training, training programs, and workshops.

With the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, more and more options are becoming available each year.

In order to help learners become more prepared for the educational choices they may face, the following areas are covered:

- Listening skills
- Note taking techniques
- Preparing for and participating in class discussions
- Scheduling study time
- Preparing for and taking exams

Listening Skills

Listening is the most common way learners learn. For the persons who are Deaf, this would mean listening with their eyes. Listening is, however, the most difficult skill to master. Although many learners appear to be listening, they are not actually doing so.

In order to be a successful listener, learners must be able to identify the purpose of the lecture. Once the purpose of the lecture is identified, the main points and supporting details for the lecture need to be identified. By keeping the points organized in some kind of structure, the learners will be able to evaluate what they have seen or heard.

Throughout the lecture, the instructor may use a variety of clues to indicate important facts. It is up to the learner to become familiar with the style of the instructor. The following are some of the more common clues used by instructors: change in voice/expression; change in rate of speech/signing; listing and numbering points; using media equipment; writing on the board; direct announcements; and non-verbal clues (i.e. pointing, using fingers to count, etc.).

By identifying and using these techniques, learners will be able to listen and question more critically. They will also be more actively involved in the discussion.

Note Taking Techniques

The purpose of teaching note taking to the learners is to help them to become more skilled at deciding which information is important enough to write down and remember and which information is not. Second, it is important that notes are taken in an organized way so that they become a useful tool to use later. Each learner has his or her own style for taking notes. It is, however, important to be thorough and effective when taking notes. Whether the notes are from in-class lectures or from the textbook, they should not be lengthy or unfocused.

There are three important reasons notes are taken. The first reason is because it is impossible to remember everything that is presented during the semester; memory tends to fade and pushes less important

facts out. Next, the instructor is sure to test on the material discussed at a later date. Finally, good note taking skills can help to ensure good grades. Listed below are ways that will make note taking easier.

- Use ink.
- Use regular size paper.
- Keep separate note books for each class.
- Date all notes.
- Leave large margins or lines between notes for additions later.
- Mark ideas that are confusing.
- Sit as close to the front as possible.
- Use abbreviations.

By using a more structured method such as outlining or concept mapping, the notes will be more organized and easier to use. Finally, in order to prepare for a lecture, become familiar with the main topic and read ahead.

Participating In Discussions

Many instructors prefer to lecture when conducting class while others handle class in a more informal way by using a discussion method. A lecture class provides more factual information whereas a discussion class allows the learner to react, evaluate, and think critically about controversial issues.

Preparing for a discussion takes more time than preparing for a lecture style class. Before a discussion, the learner will need to have read the required materials, reviewed and taken notes on the concepts that are unclear, and analyze what was read by making comments about concepts that provide poor examples or examples that include weak arguments. Finally, having questions ready will keep the discussion moving smoothly and prevent it from becoming a lecture.

During the actual discussion, the learner will have as much responsibility as the instructor to keep the discussion moving. The learner must assume an active role by participating. Participation requires that the learner ask good questions, make suggestions that can add to the previous responses of peers, and correct comments made by others that may be incorrect. While the discussion is taking place, it is important to take summary notes that include key points. Studying for tests after a discussion-type class will take less time. It is, however, important to review notes, review reading assignments, try to guess possible test questions for exams based on the class discussion and notes taken during discussion, and read assignments.

Studying

"Studying is defined as the process that is used to decide what will be learned and how to remember and recall information" (Shepard, 1987). Many learners dislike schedules; they would prefer to just be free to do what they want, when they want. They fear that they won't be spontaneous if they are restricted to a set time

for everything. In the end, however, a schedule for studying will free up time simply because the activities that must be done will get done without procrastination. A study schedule essentially helps to balance time. It is important to remember that a schedule is flexible and adjustments can easily be made. The primary purpose of a schedule is to provide a framework for using time efficiently. Doing one's best in each course requires knowing the instructor's requirements, attending class regularly, taking a note book to class, taking good notes, keeping up-to-date with assignments, and being prepared for tests.

The steps for scheduling study time depend on how much there is to study, how much time there is for studying, what needs to be studied, and when and where the studying will take place. Before scheduling study time, it is necessary to know all of the activities for the day. Finally, using visual aids such as weekly schedules, a schedule book, or monthly calendars will help to keep all activities organized.

Preparing For And Taking Tests

Most learners are given three types of tests throughout the time they attend formal education: teacher-made, textbook or publisher-made, and standardized tests. Having discussions about the testing situations can help both the learner and the instructor. Learners often have anxieties about testing and they should be encouraged to ask questions to make them feel more comfortable. When the instructor helps the learner to feel more at ease and secure about testing situations, the learner can focus on the test more fully. The following are some suggestions for helping the learner.

- Let the learner know the purpose of the test.
- Inform the learner as to how the test will be scored.
- Provide information about how the test will affect the grades.
- Let the learner know what will happen with the results of the test.

When questions such as these are answered, test anxiety decreases and the learner may feel more confident about test-taking abilities.

Learning is made easier by drawing together the information at hand. Having a general idea or goal of the class, knowing how topics are connected, looking for patterns and preparing charts or outlines are other ways to ease anxiety. The information and how it is remembered depends on the type of test that will be given.

There are two basic type of tests: objective and subjective tests. Objective tests require that the learner know exactly the right answers. Tests such as true/false, multiple choice and matching are examples of objective tests. Subjective tests require more complete recall, organization of information from the memory, and being able to express the information in an acceptable written form such as an essay.

While Deaf and Hard of Hearing young adults are often prepared to meet the requirements of high school, many are unprepared to meet the challenges of what will follow high school graduation. When goals are defined, an important sense of direction is provided for the student. The student is then sure of a direction and becomes more sure of the path to take to be successful. The curriculum that has been developed and

implemented at the Program for Hearing Impaired assists the students in addressing the challenges of life and, in addition, helps them move into the next phase of adulthood.

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Perspective on Liberal Arts Learning: First Year Seminar

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The first year at college is often the time of greatest attrition (Noel, et al., 1985; Tinto, 1987). As a result, most retention programs focus on the first year student. "Virtually all students come with two objectives: to achieve academically and to succeed socially" (Erickson & Strommer, 1991). It is precisely these two objectives (academic achievement and social connection to a friend(s) and the institution) that shape a student's decision whether or not he or she will remain in college (Astin, 1972)

Over the past few years, colleges and universities throughout the country have created First Year Seminars to address these objectives as well as wide variety of needs including:

- helping students from all ability levels succeed by explicitly teaching them skills necessary for academic success (reading, writing, time management, study skills, bibliographic instruction, etc.);
- orienting students to the culture of the academy - its special vocabulary and concepts, the nature of the disciplines, etc.;
- helping students form relationships with one another and with a supportive faculty member around a common intellectual challenge; and
- providing a forum for information essential to student success but absent from the explicit curricular requirements of the institution.

While the retention literature in higher education considers students with particular characteristics to be "high risk" students, reality suggests that ALL first year students are, to some extent, "high risk." If students can successfully complete their first year in college, the odds improve considerably that they will persist to graduation. For this reason, many First Year Seminars function as extended "new student orientation" programs. On many campuses, these classes have become a special support system for new students and a first line of defense against student attrition.

Deaf and hard of hearing students in mainstream college situations pose an extremely high risk of withdrawing from college. Most do not graduate. Stinson and Walter (1992) report that two and four-year colleges with programs for deaf students graduate an average of five deaf students for every sixteen they admit,

resulting in a retention rate of only 31%. This compares with a 42% rate among hearing students in two-year colleges and 70% in four-year college (Tinto, 1987).

In the fall of 1995, students new to Gallaudet (freshmen or transfer students) had the opportunity to enroll in a three-credit First Year Seminar. This Seminar was based on the University 101 model at The University of South Carolina (USC). A faculty curriculum development team met with John Gardner from USC to outline specific student needs and spent the spring and early summer writing and organizing course materials and establishing relationships with different programs (academic programs, residence hall programs, Library, Counseling Center, and Communications Center). The course was designed to meet the varying needs of students and makes use of innovative teaching strategies such as cooperative and problem-based learning. The course was based on the premise that if students were able to make academic progress and feel connected to other students and the institution, their chances of remaining at Gallaudet would be improved. Students learned to make connections between and among their various courses. Upper class students served as "teaching assistants." Faculty from all schools taught this course.

The course included three major content units. Unit One focused on study skills and time management, and introduced the students to an array of-out-of class workshops offered by the Student Life program. Students also began to develop academic computing skills, through in- and out-of-classroom training developed by the University's Academic Computing program. In the second unit, students explored a wide range of campus resources available to them--such as using the library for both traditional and computer-assisted research, finding appropriate help for personal problems, and investigating the range of scholarships and loans available through Office of Financial Aid. The third and final unit introduced students to the societal functions of institutions of higher learning, the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the liberal arts and how universities in general and Gallaudet in particular attempt to use their general education curricula to expose students to the liberal arts. Through interviews with key faculty members and upper class students, first-year students explored the dozens of major fields of study available to them. This last activity gave the students practice in interviewing and reporting, and also served as a tangible recognition of the often replicated finding that students who learn about and commit themselves to a major field of study are more likely to persist to graduation than those who delay in making such decisions. Each and every activity was designed to actively involve the student in meeting the two objectives for a successful college experience: making academic progress and social/institution connections.

In addition to the actual course content, students in the First Year Seminars explored several specific areas outside of class. One crucial out-of-class activity was involving students in community service activities. For example, students assisted older alumni during Homecoming Week, and participated in a campus clean-up project. Off campus activities included work with sick children, the homeless and AIDS patients. In each case, the students worked together, felt a sense of purpose and in some situations began asking questions about the kinds of majors that might be needed to work in such programs. These off campus experiences often lead to

broader discussion related to the value of liberal arts education, i.e. homelessness from economic, social, and medical points of view.

First year students are often hesitant to make use of campus resources. While students are exposed to support services and encouraged to use them, the services themselves must match the needs of the students. If not, students will quickly decide "they don't help me." Services must be more than accessible, they must be "user friendly" to make a difference. Campus tutoring services can be crucial. Students who are struggling must make academic progress if they are to succeed. For students with special needs, the tutor must create user-specific programs. For example, when students in Gallaudet's First Year Seminar were encouraged to attend tutoring sessions, the Tutoring Center was ready with specific programs for specific needs. Whether it be a specific approach on how to solve a math problem using different colors to outline steps, or tutors trained to modify materials for use with students who have specific learning disabilities, those providing the service must take into account student learning styles and needs. Students who have initial success with these kinds of academic services are more likely to use them in the future.

At the end of the first semester, an evaluation of the First Year Seminar was conducted. Results indicated that students who were enrolled in the First Year Seminar withdrew from school at a rate of 11% during the fall semester compared to students not enrolled in the First Year Seminar who withdrew at a rate of 24%. Clearly, the two objectives were met for most students enrolled. That is, when explicit opportunities were made for students to become involved, make friends and be supported in academics, retention increased. In the future, the First Year Studies program will work cooperatively with departments to ensure common academic goals for all first year students. These will include, for example, the reinforcement of study and thinking skills, and reading and writing. This year, the coordinator is working closely with the English Department and sharing information about the Seminar with all departments. We anticipate the retention will be even greater in the future.

The needs of deaf and hard of hearing students are similar regardless of setting. Faculty and staff working with deaf and hard of hearing students in mainstream post-secondary institutions can take advantage of existing First Year Seminars on campus to meet the objectives of academic progress and social/institution connections. Institutions can organize a section of the First Year Seminar for all deaf and hard of hearing students. Students might, for example, investigate resources on campus that answer specific questions related to serving them. If a First Year Seminar is not available, support workshops could be designed to accomplish the same tasks. Clearly, the retention rate for deaf and hard of hearing students in the mainstream must be improved. When institutions structure support for deaf and hard of hearing students keeping in mind that when students make academic progress, and feel connected to others and the institution, they tend to stay, higher percentages of deaf and hard of hearing students will receive their degrees.

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